Synthesis of Theory & Practice
CCT 694   Fall 2008

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Office/phone call hours: M 1.40-3.40, during class, or by arrangement
Class Time: M 4-6.30 (except where otherwise noted)
Classroom: TBA
Course website: http://www.cct.umb.edu/synthforms.html (includes all forms and handouts)

Course Overview

This "Capstone experience" is an opportunity for you to synthesize your practical and theoretical learning in Critical & Creative Thinking through a project in an area of your special interest. There are many specific options for the Synthesis project, from the development of a traditional theoretical paper to a curriculum or professional development series, to the creation of a web site. One component of each option is a 20-40 page (4500-9000 word) paper or "Synthesis." Through the meetings, activities, and tasks of the Synthesis seminar the instructor coaches you along towards completing the "Synthesis" and you get input and support from other students.

You should spend the summer break before the synthesis semester doing reading and research on your project in consultation with your advisor and other readers. Once the semester starts, each CrCrTh 694 class meeting will include a check-in on your progress, your buddy check-ins, and your concrete goals for the coming week. **You should be aiming for 5 pages or 1000-1200 words of new or revised material each week.** We will spend time on the theme for the week, which will include reviewing the work you have been doing in light of the "phases of research and engagement" introduced in the 692/698 course (http://cct.wikispaces.com/Phases). (In the synthesis you plan your work using the tools and practices you have been introduced to. The idea is NOT that you pick up the theme/phase only when it appears in the schedule.) This review may lead you to revise what you thought was "finished," but openness to revision is one of the goals of reflective practitioners. In any case, the review of the different tools and practices of research and engagement will help prepare you to coach/teach/support students and/or colleagues. We will also spend time in student-instructor conferences and working with other students in "buddy" pairs or small groups. Students should bring printouts of their latest work to class to facilitate revising. You will try to arrange access to computers for research and writing (or bring your laptop).

Outside class you will be submitting drafts to your advisor and other reader(s) and meeting with them according to schedules/sub-deadlines that you arrange. **Your advisor should be the primary person with whom you work on conceptualizing the topic, identifying appropriate scope and approach, and revising drafts.** Unless you specifically arrange otherwise, the seminar instructor will be your advisor. If not, s/he will serve as a second reader. Allow two weeks for comments on what you submit. Attach earlier commented-on drafts for comparison.
** See **Notes on/for Advisors and Readers** appended to the syllabus

Given the teaching and advising load of faculty members, you should not rely on your advisor or reader(s) to do detailed copy-editing of your writing. Moreover, a copy-editing relationship between

student and teacher usually gets in the way of dialogue around the content and overall organization of your synthesis. **Assistance from some outside party, skilled in manuscript-editing, should be arranged by each student. This is well worth the expense.**

If you do not finish your synthesis during the synthesis course, you should still complete the draft self-assessment for your grade (see below), and then:
a) register for a one-credit independent study each semester (including the summer) to continue your relationship with your advisor; and
b) participate in relevant activities, such as buddy support and work-in-progress presentations, with future cohorts of synthesizers.

SECTIONS TO FOLLOW IN SYLLABUS
> **Requirements**
> **Grading**
> **Texts and Materials**
> **Schedule of Classes**
> **Summary of Tasks, Target Dates and Deadlines**
> **Notes on/for Advisors and Readers**
> **Goals for Synthesis of Theory and Practice**
> **Combined Practitioner's Narrative and other Synthesis options**

Additional Material (Forms and Handouts) are available via course website (.../ in the syllabus denotes http://www.cct.umb.edu).

Requirements

1. The final Synthesis should be 20-40 pages (4500-9000 words), depending on the option selected, and ready for submission to the CCT Program following Graduate School Guidelines as distilled and illustrated in M. Liblanc's Guidelines for Preparation of a Synthesis, and handouts distributed from time to time (and linked to .../synthforms.html).

Options for the Synthesis Project include:
> Long essay/paper;
> Case Study/Practitioner's Narratives;
> Curriculum Unit/ Professional Development Workshop Series;
> Original Products (with documentation); and
> Arts Option (Performance) (also with documentation).

See the CCT Handbook (.../capstone.html) for further description of these options.

**See also the description of a Combined Practitioner's Narrative and other Synthesis options, appended to the syllabus.

Theses and syntheses from previous years can be viewed in the CCT "closet," for which Peter Taylor has the key, or in full-text links to some of the abstracts, which can be viewed on CCT website (.../abstracts-TOC.html).

As part of your Synthesis Project, the following are required:
> 1A. An Abstract of your synthesis, submitted in electronic form for inclusion on the CCT website and publication by the University. (Optionally, you can submit your complete synthesis in electronic form to be linked to the abstract on the website);
> 1Bi. A 30-45 minute Public Presentation during classtime based on your synthesis project; OR
> 1Bii. A Run-through at the CCT in Practice Open House of activities and other group processes developed in your synthesis (up to 90 mins).

In addition, the Program requires:
2Ai. an electronic copy of the synthesis (including scanned in versions of any figures or photos) (OR alternative: one loose-leaf, single-sided original of your synthesis on archival paper)
2Aii. two copies bound at Central Reprographics with black tape binding and red front and back covers on firmer stock

2B. An exit Self-Assessment that allows you to review your CCT experience in relation to the twenty goals listed at the end of the syllabus. A copy will be kept in your CCT file to help document the Program's effect on students.

Grading
At the end of the Synthesis seminar, wherever you are in your project, complete a draft of the self-assessment, but focus on your synthesis work. (This focus differs from the exit self-assessment for the program, which encompasses the whole CCT experience). Then mark in the left margin beside each goal either
** [= "fulfilled very well"],
OK [= "did a reasonable job, but room for more development"], or
-> [= "to be honest, this still needs serious attention"]

You can then calculate your grade as follows:
Start with 80 points. For each OK add 1/2 point; for each ** add 1 point. Subtract 2 points for each class you missed over two; 1 point for each week you missed doing a check-in with your buddy; and 1 point for each target date you missed. If you are only a point below a higher grade, the instructor will talk with you about whether you were too hard on yourself for some goals and you will decide together whether to bump your grade up.

The minimum grade for A is 95, for A- is 87.5, for B+ is 80, for B is 72.5; for B- is 65; for C+ is 57.5; and for C is 50. Below 50 points you must repeat the course.

Texts and Materials

Required:
Liblanc, M. and P. J. Taylor (2002). Guidelines for Preparation of a Synthesis: Critical and
        Creative Thinking Program. (.../synthguidelines.doc)
Recommended as guides to writing and revising:
Elbow, P. (1981). Writing with Power. New York: Oxford University Press.
Fulwiler, T. and A. R. Hayakawa (2002). Pocket Reference for Writers. Upper Saddle River, NJ, Prentice Hall.
Turabian, K. L. (1996). A Manual For Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Disertations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
American Psychological Association (2000). Publication Manual.

** SCHEDULE OF CLASSES **

During summer (before class 1)
Vision for your projects
Phase A. Overall vision; Goal: "I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose)."
Topics & Activities:
    Free writing (Who do you want to reach? What do you want to convey to them? Why do <u>you</u> want to address <u>them</u> about <u>that</u>? What obstacles do you see ahead?)
    In class exercise: Governing question for project
    Verbal report on scope of intended project
    Establish initial buddy for winter re: plans, progress, or lack thereof (.../synthbuddy.doc).
Recommended tasks for phase A:
    After class 0: Review Elbow, chaps. 1-3 & 13 on writing, freewriting, and sharing
    By 9/1: Submit proposal (or else you will be deregistered from the course)
    For class 1: Bring revised project title and single paragraph overview (2 copies)
Other tasks:
Set up tasks
    Read and digest syllabus and requirements, etc.
    Download Synthesis Guidelines
    Download template file for your synthesis chapters, make a copy, review and practice the following: insert your own words; print out specific pages; insert page breaks; add a reference in consistent style; insert lesson plans & workshop text as single-spaced "figures" -- get peer assistance if needed.
    Brush up on computer and other competencies (.../competencies.html).
    Get an overview of the other files on course website and download where applicable.

    Arrange advisor if this is to be someone other than the seminar instructor and arrange reader.

Supplement your sources of information and informants
Phase B. Background information; Goal: "I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now."
Phase F. Direct information, models & experience; Goal: "I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources."
Recommended tasks for phase B:
    Establish/practice connection to http://www.lib.umb.edu and use of reference databases (see on-line library tutorial)
    Establish your system of recording references/citations (e.g., .../citation.doc)
    For class 2: Bibliography of reading completed or planned, <u>formatted as for final synthesis</u>.
Recommended tasks for phase F:
    Write down your top 5 questions for which you haven't got answers from published literature and so would like someone to answer directly
    Arrange interview or other observation; prepare your interview/observation guide; conduct interview/observation

Process Review of CCT experience to date (for those planning a Combined Practitioner's Narrative and other Synthesis options; see description of this option appended to syllabus)
Phase J. Taking stock; Goal: " To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing."
Recommended tasks for phase J:
    Collect exhibits that convey key passages of your process of development during your CCT studies.
    Draft the narrative that connects/weaves these exhibits into a story.

Class 1 (9/8)
Checking your vision for the project
(Phase A continued)
Topics & Activities:

> Verbal reports on progress during winter break
> Peer exchange on project title, Governing question and Paragraph overview of project (Check that it's clear: Who do you want to reach? What do you want to convey to them? Why do <u>you</u> want to address <u>them</u> about <u>that</u>? What steps are needed to do so? How will you set the stage for readers to understand why you have chosen this topic?)

Other tasks:

> Arrange sub-deadlines with advisor and reader(s) & submit schedule in class 4. (See target dates later in syllabus.) Preferably meet with all parties at the one time.
> Sign up for in-class conferences & refreshments.
> Arrange essential reading list with advisor and reader and include in bibliography submitted in class 2.
> Start looking for a copy-editor.

Class 2 (9/15)
Supplement your sources of information and informants
(Phases B & F continued)
Topics & Activities:

> Meet in Library Instructional Room, 4th floor, Healey library (place to be confirmed) for a session on Reference material available through the library.
> (See also on-line tutorial, http://www.lib.umb.edu/webtutorial)
> Peer review on bibliography (Check formatting and coverage in relation to Governing Q.)
> Peer assistance with library databases

Other tasks:

> Read links on writing literature review. Plan your own strategies and the form in which you will demonstrate your knowledge of the literature.

Class 3 (9/22; 6.45pm)
Extended conference before class
a. Models of engagement (see phases F and I)
Presentation by alum, TBA, showing how one might go on to develop one's Practicum research
b. Organizing and processing research materials (see phases B and C)
Organizing one's Computer
Note-taking and summarizing
Share ideas about and practice organizing and processing research materials (bring your workbook with any material and notes derived from research to date, and your laptop, zip disk/CD or printout of the system of directories/folders on your computer)
Annotating a bibliography and refining your Governing Question

**Deadline for application to graduate in December with $150 commencement fee check, around 9/29

Class 4 (9/29)
Clarifying your synthesis formulation, Governing Question, and Component Arguments
Phase C. Possible directions and priorities; Goal: "I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, decide most important direction expressed in revised Governing Question."

Phase D. Propositions, Counter-Propositions, Counter-Counter-Propositions; Goal: "I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions."
Topics & Activities:
Identify areas and priorities for research through Map-making and/or Summarizing the different sub-arguments for your topic and positions regarding each. Map or summary then probed by peers. Refine Governing Q. and separate key arguments from subordinate or dispensable ones.

Class 5 (10/6)
Design of Remaining Research and Writing
Phase E. Design of further research and engagement; Goal: "I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence to realize these objectives."
Tasks:
Draft/update research & writing timetable in light of weeks 1-4, and/or
Strategic personal planning (http://www.faculty.umb.edu/peter_taylor/StrPersPlanning.doc)

**Target date for submission of draft introduction and review of literature: 10/23

No class 10/13, but keep researching and writing.

Class 6 (10/20)
Interviewing
See Phase F. Direct information, models & experience; Goal: "I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources."
Getting people to speak about/explain what they usually don't; dealing with experts; effective questions.
Prepare interview guide and practice interviewing

Between classes 6 & 7: Preparation for Presentations on Work-in-Progress
Phase G. Clarification through communication; Goal: "I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports I am starting to prepare."
Topics & Activities:
Using preparation of visual aids to aid your on-going clarification of the structure of your overall argument
Practice presentation in front of classmates or other friends.
Inform instructor of A/V needs.

Class 7 (10/27)
Presentation on Work-in-Progress
(Phase G continued)
Topics & Activities
Presentations to practicum students (15 minutes each student + 10 minutes discussion + 5 minutes stock-taking)

**Target date for submission to advisor and readers of complete draft, 11/3.

Class 8 (11/3)
Extended conference during office hours. No class.

Class 9 (11/10)
No class. Keep writing & revising

Reread Elbow, p. 141 to end of chapter 13 on getting feedback

Class 10 (11/17; time TBA -- in class or during office hours)
Getting and Using Feedback on Writing (Phase G continued)
Peer review of report outlines or overall arguments, in pairs

Direct Writing & Quick Revising
See Phase H. Compelling communication; Goal: "My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to."
>   Direct Writing & Quick Revising (to produce narrative of synthesis)
>   Reverse outlining of drafted chapters and text—clarify the topic of each chapter, section, and paragraph; clarify their connection one to the next and to the whole of which they are a part.

Class 11 (11/24)
>   Extended conference during office hours on public presentation, Writing Abstracts, Formatting, Proof-reading, including checking title page and other formal material

**Target date for submission of one copy of Process Review Portfolio (aka Reflective Practice Portfolio, aka Metacognition Portfolio) for anyone choosing the Combined option: 11/24

Class 12 (12/1)
Public Presentations ("exit performance") as a mini-workshop for CCT in Practice Open House (5.00-6.30pm), Place TBA
(Phases H & I)
Phase I. Engagement with others; Goal: "I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation."
Topics & Activities:
>   Mini-workshop Presentations (45-90 minutes)

**Target date for submission of completed Synthesis for checking and go-ahead by Program Coordinator to make bound copy: 12/8

Class 13 (12/8)
Taking Stock of the CCT experience: Where to go from here?
See Phase J. Taking stock; Goal: "To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing."

Recommended tasks for phase J:
>   Draft Self-assessment
>   Sharing ideas about Self-assessment
>   CCT evaluation process and GCE course evaluation

**Absolute deadline for submission of one copy of Synthesis for checking and go-ahead by Program Coordinator to get signatures from advisors and readers and make archival copy or submit electronic copy: 12/19. *If a student misses this deadline, graduation is deferred until June and student must arrange continued relation with advisor and reader, which may inlcude enrolling in 1 credit independent study during spring.*
>   **12/22 Deadline for: Self-assessment**
>   **Electronic copy of entire synthesis approved by Program coordinator**
>   **(Bound copies can come later – but not too much later.)**

SUMMARY OF TASKS, TARGET DATES and DEADLINES

Soon after 5/29	Establish buddy and check-in schedule during summer re: progress.
Before 9/1	Arrange advisor and other reader if you have not already done so
Before 9/1	Submit proposal and get it approved.
For class 1 (9/8)	Bring revised project title and single paragraph overview (2 copies)
For class 2 (9/15)	Bibliography of reading completed or planned, formatted as for Synthesis
9/29	Deadline for application to graduate with $150 check for commencement fee.
Before class 4 (9/29)	Arrange sub-deadlines with advisor and reader & submit schedule in class 4.
10/23	Target date for submission of draft introduction and review of literature
Before class 7 (10/30)	Practice presentation to buddy or other friends.
Class 7 (10/27)	Work-in-progress Presentations to peers (10 minutes each student + 5 minutes discussion + 5 minutes stock-taking)
11/3	Target date for submission to advisor and readers of complete draft
11/20	Target date for submission of one copy of Process Review/Reflective Practice/Metacognition Portfolio for anyone choosing the Combined option
12/1	Public Presentations as part of CCT in Practice Open House
12/8	Target date for submission of one copy of Synthesis on normal paper for checking and go-ahead by PT to make bound copy
12/18	Absolute deadline for submission of one copy of Synthesis for checking by Program Coordinator and go-ahead to make bound copy
12/22	Deadline for CCT Self-assessment

Notes on/for Advisors and Readers

Except when a special arrangement is approved, the primary advisor will be the regular CCT faculty member teaching the synthesis seminar. The reader(s) may be anyone experienced in the student's area of specialization and, in general, possessing a Master's degree or higher. The synthesis seminar instructor is either the student's advisor or one reader.

The responsibility of the **advisor** is to be the primary person with whom the student works on conceptualizing the topic, identifying appropriate scope and approach, and revising drafts. If the advisor does not have expertise in the student's subject area, it is the student's responsibility to get the necessary specialist input from a reader and others.

The advisor should be aware of the technical requirements of submitting a Synthesis to the CCT Program, but the student should also consult with the Synthesis seminar instructor and use the seminar to fulfill the requirements. During the last three weeks of the semester finishing synthesis students will make presentations on their work, which the advisor should attend. There is no formal defense of the syntheses.

The responsibilities of a **reader** are: to convey to the student before the second week of the semester (preferably earlier) the areas and material that should be addressed; to comment on a complete draft; and to review and comment on changes made between that draft and the final draft. If the reader specializes in the area of the student's project, their comments may stem primarily from their special knowledge or experience. Otherwise, readers should simply think of themselves as intelligent people who want the student's distinctive ideas and accomplishments to emerge as powerfully as possible from the written Synthesis. The reader does not have to focus on the technical requirements of submitting a Synthesis to the CCT Program; for this, the student, advisor, and the instructor for the Synthesis seminar are responsible. Near the end of the semester synthesis students will make presentations on their work, which the readers should attend. There is no formal defense of the syntheses.

Goals for Synthesis of Theory and Practice

The goals are divided into two sets:

I. "My Synthesis Product Shows That..." (adapted from the "Phases of research and engagement" in the Practicum course); and

II. Developing as a reflective practitioner, including taking initiative in or through relationships

I. "MY SYNTHESIS PRODUCT SHOWS THAT..."

(adapted from the "Phases of research and engagement" in the Practicum course in the expectation that these are also relevant goals for students' work in moving towards the synthesis product)

A. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).

B. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.

C. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.

D. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.

E. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.

F. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.

G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.

H. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to.

I. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

J. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVE IN AND THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.

2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.

3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.

4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.

5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.

6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.

7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for the them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.

8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).

9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work—criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.

10. I have approached the CCT synthesis course and the CCT program as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development.

Combined Practitioner's Narrative and other Synthesis options
(Version 3/14/02)

In the Synthesis Project students review and reflect on the integration into their professional lives of critical and creative thinking skills and strategies and demonstrate mastery of competencies and skills appropriate and relevant to their disciplines. Students have a number of options to choose from, which are listed in the Graduate Bulletin.

As an experiment, the CCT faculty has decided that students may combine a practitioner's narrative related to your development during your CCT's studies (option 2b) with a reduced length version of any of the other options. The practitioner's narrative "is an occasion for the writer to think deeply about his/her own practice—its origin, dynamic nature, influences, commitments, and future directions—to yield useful insights and discoveries."

The recommended way to undertake this kind of practitioner's narrative is to prepare a "process review portfolio" consisting of exhibits with one-page annotations and an overall introduction, afterword, and a paragraph overview (to be included with your synthesis abstract). These exhibits should be selected to convey your process of development during your studies, not only your best work or your final products.

Ideally you would have been saving material for exhibits all through your studies. We recognize that it will not be an easy task to reconstruct and review your process after the fact. To help warm up your thinking about whether to pursue this option and about how to select your exhibits and compose the accompanying narrative, we recommend that you start by doing an early draft of part II of the exit self-assessment. This is structured around ten goals related to "developing as a reflective practitioner, including taking initiative in and through relationships." For each item, you should identify and describe:
a) something(s) that reflects what you have achieved well related to this goal, and
b) something(s) you have struggled with/ need more help on/ want to work further on.
(This two-part structure relates to the goal of the CCT Program that graduates are life-long developers, not a completed "product" at the end of the Program.)
Any given exhibit can speak to more than one of these goals. It is recommended that multiple exhibits relate to the first two of the ten goals, namely those about incorporating knowledge and perspectives and on processes, experiences, and struggles from CCT and other courses.

Models and additional rubrics will be distributed as the CCT faculty gains experience in helping students complete this form of Practitioner's Narrative. (The "Rs of the CCT experience" at http://www.cct.umb.edu/CCTRs.xls may be helpful.) If you think you might wish to pursue this option, talk about it with your advisor as soon as possible. Once you have settled on the expectations for the two parts of this hybrid option, you will need to provide plans, outlines, and drafts of the Practitioner's Narrative for your advisors to comment on, just as you are doing for the other part.